

Exploring ‘-nyms’ Lexical Relations in Wale Okediran’s *Tenants of the House*

Yemisi Famakinwa

Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife

Abstract

Drawing cues from two ‘to-infinitive’ expressions centralised in *Tenants of the House*; “To kill is a crime: to kill at the right time is politics”; and “To get my nomination confirmed at the constituency level had been a fierce struggle”, the paper considers for analysis, different lexical relations/ the ‘-nyms’ as deployed in the novel of Okediran, *Tenants of the House*. This becomes necessary in order to see how the different incidents in the novel share connection with certain truths or facts about people, their life style, and other entities (living and non-living). Employing the framework of Hoey’s (2005), the paper observes that the definitive nature of the identified ‘to-infinitive’ expressions in Okediran’s *Tenants of the House* paved way for lexemes employed in the literary text to share a bond with lexical relations in Semantics. In other words, the deployment of lexical relations/the ‘-nyms’ in *Tenants of the House* are corollaries to the two identified ‘to-infinitive’ expressions. Hence, the lexical relations follow directly from the two “to-infinitive” expressions to actualise meanings in the literary text. Also, the identified lexical relations showcase the relationship that exist amongst humans/non-humans. The paper concludes that the effective positioning of the different lexical relations in a text could contribute to a text’s thematic objective.

Key Words: Infinitives, to-infinitive, lexical semantics, lexical relations, *Tenants of the House*

Introduction

In any English sentence construction, words play crucial roles since words are building blocks for sentence construction. The same words are akin to linguistic expressions which are context dependent. Hence, the roles played by words and other larger linguistic expressions which are also context dependent, cannot be underemphasised. One of such linguistic expressions is the ‘to-infinitive’. Nordquist (2020) describes the ‘to-infinitive’ as that which usually occupies different positions within a clause and has several uses. The point made by Nordquist applies to the identified ‘to-infinitive’ expressions in the novel. The only difference is that the identified ‘to-infinitive’ expressions which are centralised in the novel, are significant for meaning and hence, serve as corollaries to the different lexical relations deployed in the literary text. For a fact, in grammar, the subject of any sentence is either a pronoun or a noun. It is thus unusual to have the infinitive structure begin a sentence. Albeit an infinitive functions as the subject of the clause, the same refers to an activity in a general rather than a specific way. It should be noted that the infinitive is a reduced verbal form. The same is not marked for tense or person and does not often have a subject. Albeit the infinitive occupies the subject position, it is usually followed by a static verb. Thus, in English sentence construction, the following static verbs can co-occur with the infinitive: *be, seem, appear, act, become, sound, look, feel, taste*, and so on. Moreover, if the infinitive functions as the subject of the sentence, the infinitive either serves as a definition and/or quotes. Therefore, as subjects, infinitives can be marked for activities, quotes and

definitions. In a nut shell, the ‘to-infinitive’ is described as the most succinct way to convey thought. Different types of infinitives in the literature are represented below:

- (i) bare infinitives (i.e. infinitives without ‘to’; used after modal verbs, used with other auxiliaries or certain other verbs in the active voice): I will have Tayo do it./ She could have assisted clean the floor.
- (ii) split infinitives: We decided to quickly eat dinner which can also split to read,= We decided to eat dinner quickly.
- (iii) ‘to do’/for + ing infinitives: She likes to study French./These scissors are for cutting papers.
- (iv) negative infinitives: I decided not to join the club./I decided not to visit the supermarket.
- (v) continuous infinitives: She wants to be working as a nurse./She wants to be running as an athlete.

It should be noted that the different infinitives explicated above, also feature in the work of Biber et al. (1999) where five grammatical patterns realising the ‘to-clause’ are identified. Moreover, aside the types and patterns realising the infinitives, there are also different grammatical positions the ‘to-infinitive’ can assume in a sentence thus:

(a) As Noun Phrases (Subject of the sentence)

Sentence (1) To err /is/ human, to give /advice/ is a good act.

(2) To err/ is/ human, to forgive/ is/ divine.

(b) As Adverbs (Adjunct of the sentence)

Sentence (3) I /went/ fifty miles/ to see the live performance.

(4) The matron /returned/ to help.

(c) As Adjectives (Noun-Complement of the sentence)

Sentence (5) Jide/ is looking/ for something to read.

(6) Show/him/ the shoe/ to polish.

(d) As Nouns (Complement of the sentence)

Sentence (7) The children/ are learning/ to read/write. (a complemented expression of ing” with ‘to-infinitive’)

(8) To dance /was/ her interest. (a case of ‘to-infinitive’ as gerund in the subject position)

Also, the ‘to-infinitive’ can play the roles of non-assertive verbs and non-assertive adjectives as follows:

Sentence (9) We/ allowed/ him/ to stay home. (‘to-infinitive’ as non-assertive verb)

(10) They /want /to follow you. (‘to-infinitive’ as non-assertive adjective)

On the contrary, Kreidler (1998) stipulates a rule of English grammar which states that the ‘to infinitive’ may require *an overt subject* in an infinitive clause when the subject of the infinitive is different from the subject of the main verb. Hence, if the subject of the infinitive is the same as the subject of the main verb, the subject is termed, *a tacit subject*. The following examples from the literature explicate better:

Sentence (11) The Hawks /expect/ the Ravens/ to win/ the game. (‘The Ravens’= overt subject)

(12) The Hawks /expect to win/ the game. (‘The Hawks’ = tacit subject)

The paper further discusses the two ‘to-infinitive’ expressions centralised in *Tenants of the House*:

Sentence (13) To kill/ is/ a crime: to kill at the right time/ is/ politics.

(14) To get my nomination confirmed at the constituency level/ had been/ a fierce struggle.

In Sentence (13), the underlined ‘to-infinitive’, ‘to kill’, is a noun phrase as well as the subject of the sentence. The same applies to Sentence (14). The only difference is that in Sentence (14), the ‘to-infinitive’ as well as a noun phrase, co-occurs with other larger linguistic expressions to make up the subject of the sentence. In Sentence (14) therefore, the subject of the sentence, is not only the ‘to-infinitive’ but, **To get my nomination confirmed at the constituency level...**

As the foci of the study therefore, the two identified ‘to-infinitive’ expressions in the novel, Sentence (13) and Sentence (14), signal meaning in a way that unravels the different lexical relationships/the ‘-nyms’ in the novel. Thus the study considers for further discussion on the ‘-nyms’, lexical semantics which caters for a combined form of grammar (lexemes/words) and semantics (meanings of the lexemes/words).

Lexical Semantics and the Lexical Theory of Hoey

Lexical semantics otherwise known as lexico-semantics, is a sub-field of linguistic semantics. Saeed (2003) defines the term, lexical semantics as the study of word meaning (Saeed, 2003, p.53). In other words, lexical semantics showcases the way words or lexemes in grammar are positioned to structure or convey their meanings. Against this backdrop, the lexical priming of Hoey (2005), is considered. As a new theory of word use, the lexical priming theory is about word use in language. The term, lexical priming, concerns words and the different ways they (words) are put to use in language in order to actualise meaning in the real world. In other words, lexical priming is concerned with word use according to the way language users perceive it. Thus, it can be remarked that lexical priming and the Use Theory of word meaning are synonymous since Use Theory also concerns words and their different uses and meanings in sentence construction. Agreeably, how words are used, displaced and deployed to convey meaning in any literary piece is no doubt, a practice. This practice is peculiar to a literary writer. A literary writer and a language user like Okediran, therefore, in this literary piece, adopts

unconsciously, the referential approach to word meaning. The referential approach to word meaning is also a theory which considers words and their meanings in relation to referents. In other words, words have referents relating to things or ideas in the real world. As far as the referential theory or approach is concerned, therefore, the intended message in the novel becomes easily understood. Similarly, in lexical priming, word meanings are not confined to the dictionary meanings alone. Rather, there is a point of interaction since the words employed by literary writers have common patterns of use. As a result, literary writers make use of words that may have different referents in real life but such referents share the same meaning. Samples of similar word meaning but different referents abound in the novel of Okediran, *Tenants of the House* in order to elucidate meaning and intents.

Statement of the Research Problem and Objectives of the Study

From traditional grammar to modern grammar, the ‘to-infinitive’ has been subject to diverse controversies. The controversies range from its uses through its functions. With the on-going debate, researches on the ‘to-infinitive’ expressions have been extensively researched. Such studies include; Quirk et al. (1972), Biber et al. (1999), Ojea (2008), Duffley (2003), Nordquist (2020) and 7ESL INFINITIVES (2023), among others. From the studies and discussions on the ‘to-infinitive’, the infinitive is better construed as not only a linguistic expression but a grammatical entity (a verb phrase; a verbal consisting of a particle ‘to’ + a verb) exhibiting different patterns and hence, playing several grammatical roles.

The present study thus considers Wale Okediran’s *Tenants of the House*, in order to explore the ‘-nyms’ or the lexical relations from the lens of two ‘to-infinitive expressions’ centralised in the novel. Studies carried out on *Tenants of the House* include; Oloruntoba-Oju (2012), Ekpang (2014), Eniayekan (2016), and Edokpayi (2017), among others. The different studies examine the literary text of Okediran from the perspectives of Grammar and Semantics. The present study is not an exception. The study explores from the point of view of Semantics, the different inherent ‘-nyms’ or lexical relations in the novel. This is the gap the present study intends to fill.

The Author, Wale Okediran

Wale Okediran was born, April 14, 1955 in Iseyin, Oyo State of Nigeria. Okediran studied for his B. Sc (Health Sciences) and MB, CHB, both from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (1973-1980); obtained a Diploma in writing (1983) and became a Fellow of General Medical Practitioners of Nigeria (FGP) in 1990. A former Secretary and President of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), Okediran practised Medicine in Ibadan for many years where he is generally known as “the people’s doctor” by virtue of his undisguised generous attention to the poor and helpless who need his assistance.

Okediran is well known for his essays, short stories and novels which are deeply rooted in the contemporary Nigerian society in which he lives. In 1990, his poem, *Call to Worship*, won a book prize of the American Poetry Association contest while his novel, *The Boys at the Border*, was shortlisted for the 1991 Commonwealth Literature Prize. Indeed, most of his works have been shortlisted for awards or are actually award-winners. His novel, *The Rescue of Uncle Bobs*, won the 1998 ANA Prize for Children’s Literature while *Dreams Die at Twilight* was

shortlisted for the NLNG Nigerian Literature Prize in 2004. In the same year, *Dreams Die at Twilight* was adjudged one of the 25 best books of the last 25 years in Nigeria by Spectrum Books Limited. In 2005, *Strange Encounters* won the ANA Fiction Prize while *The Weaving Looms* was shortlisted for the 2008 Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa. Okediran though a medical doctor, also served as Member of the Federal House of Representatives, Abuja, Nigeria between 2003 and 2007. He was the National President of the Association of Nigerian Authors from 2005 to 2009.

From the biography, Wale Okediran, was once a ‘Tenant of the House of Representatives’ and as a result, he identifies himself perhaps, with one of the characters in the novel. The novel is also part of his walk in life. It becomes, therefore, necessary to know certain truths about people and their lifestyle more so, in connection with the deployed ‘-nyms’ or lexical relations in *Tenants of the House*.

The Novel, *Tenants of the House*

Tenants of the House is a literary text identified as a novel and hence, not a play nor a poem. The novel lampoons social vices and ills by focusing on certain individuals in a society. In other words, the literary text exposes the vices of notable individuals especially those in the positions of authority. In the novel, the struggle and tussle for power and position encapsulate the roles played by desperate members of the House of Representatives. Notable characters in the text include; Honourable Samuel Bakura and Honourable Elizabeth Bello who, in the novel, are romantically and politically intermingled. Interestingly, the two characters uttered the ‘to-infinitive’ expressions used as the basis for the analysis of the text and which in turn, signal the deployment of the- nyms/lexical relations in the novel. Thus, the novel unveils a nation struggling in shambles; representatives struggle for selfish motives: the acquisition of amassed wealth, power and position. In addition, the novel presents an adventure of a mix of love and politics and the shrill voice of a nation in urgent need of political renewal and rebirth. Full of suspense, the novel dwells extensively on politics and its attendant ills. From the synopsis, the intention of the writer is laid bare: to uphold justice in a corrupt setting. The paper further discusses the –nyms/lexical relations in Semantics and its deployment in the novel.

The ‘-Nyms’ in Semantics and its Deployment in *Tenants of the House*

As remarked by Denham and Löbeck (2010), lexical relations are otherwise known as the ‘nyms’. They include the following: synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, polysemy and homonymy (Denham& Löbeck, 2010, p.295).

Synonymy: Two or more words exhibit a relationship of synonymy if they are capable of being defined descriptively, expressively and/or socially (Kreidler, 1998, p.96). In other words, synonymy is a relationship that is concerned with expressions having identical meaning. In addition, synonymy can be total or partial. Instances in the novel include thus: Notes and Proceedings (which are samples of Total synonymy; since lexemes have the same descriptive, expressive and social meanings); and Meetings and Get together (which are samples of Partial synonymy; since lexemes have the same descriptive meaning but differ in their expressive and social meaning; ‘get together’ = ‘party’, in another linguistic environment).

Occurrences of synonymy in *Tenants of the House*:

- (i) ...wondering, pondering (P. 6)
- (ii) ...anywhere, everywhere (P.6)
- (iii) ...meetings...get together (P.12)
- (iv) ...Presidential Villa...Aso Rock (P.12)
- (v) ...Notes and Proceedings...(P.15)
- (vi) ...pistol...ever- ready Colt Defender (P.33)
- (vii) ...quietly...slowly (P.167)
- (viii) ...fool...idiot (P. 306)

Excerpt I and Discussions

- The Speaker finished his prayer. He moved on to the **Notes and Proceedings** for the day. (P.15)
- In her handbag was her **pistol, the ever-ready Colt Defender, ...**(P.33)

The different samples of synonyms show that the relationship of synonymy is deployed in the literary text as a lexical device needful to portray certain entities in a way that the readers would understand without a distortion in meaning. For instance, 'pistol' in the text is used referentially to mean the same as, 'ever-ready Colt Defender' (P.33, sample vi). Other examples include 'Aso Rock' deployed in the text to mean the same as 'Presidential Villa.'(P.12, sample iv). Hence, the different pairs of synonyms in the text express the same idea that is, they have the same truth value (Kreidler, 1998, p.96).

Antonymy: Two or more words are opposites if the choice of one excludes the choice of the other. Thus, if one is human then, one cannot be non-human at the same time. In other words, if one is true, the other is false (Kreidler, 1998, p.100). To Palmer (1976), the relationship termed antonymy, is, oppositeness of meaning. There are two broad categories of antonymy: gradable and non-gradable. Instances of gradable antonyms include: tall/short; big/small with possible occurrences of middle terms and degree of comparativeness. Instances of non-gradable include: friend/enemy, joy/sorrow with no middle terms and degree of comparativeness more so that it is not possible to say more friend/more enemy is a pair of antonyms.

Occurrences of antonymy in *Tenants of the House*:

- (i) ...human and non-human (P.2)
- (ii) ...supporters ... opponents (P.35)
- (iii) ...joys and sorrows. (P.50)
- (iv) ...exact or inexact, ... (P.87)
- (v) ...human ...inhuman... (P.198)
- (vi) ...patriots and backlegs... (P.201)

Excerpt II and Discussions

- ...give me the strength lightly to bear my **joys and sorrows**. (P.50)

- Many more politicians have been destroyed by their **supporters** than by their **opponents** (P.35).

The different samples of antonyms show that the lexical relationship of antonymy is deployed by the writer. Also from the samples, the non-gradable antonyms abound. For instance in (P.87, sample iv & P.198, sample v) whereby it is not possible to say that something is *more exact* than the other; and that somebody is *more human* than the other respectively. It should be noted that the novel/literary text is political and for that reason, humans are involved in a state of opposition. Hence, it is possible for certain characters in the novel to be portrayed as ‘supporters or opponents’ (sample ii) while another character may find himself or herself in a situation of ‘joys’ and/or ‘sorrows’ (sample iii).

Hyponymy: The –nym/lexical relationship of hyponymy, is a relationship of class inclusion or meaning entailment (Lyons, 1977). In other words, the meaning of one is included in the meaning of the other. The sentence frame below further explains: “A is the hyponym of B iff the meaning of B is part of the meaning of A and A is a subordinate of B”. Thus, “*Rose* is the hyponym of *Flower* iff (if and only if) the meaning of *Flower* is part of the meaning of *Rose* and *Rose* is a subordinate of *Flower*”. The upper term is known as the super ordinate while the lower term is the hyponym (Kreidler, 1998, p.93). However, it is possible to have company of hyponyms known as co-hyponyms. Hence, *Tulip*, *Hibiscus*, *Rose* and *Sunflower* are considered, co-hyponyms of *Flower*. It should be noted that hyponymy can overlap with meronymy. This is because both involve ‘class inclusion’.

Occurrences of hyponymy and/or meronymy in *Tenants of the House*:

- (i) ...**traits**; strength, good luck, independence of mind,...(P.3)
- (ii) ...executive, legislative and judicial arms of government ...**Three Arms Zone** (P.13)
- (iii) ...**expensive drinks**; Cristal, Courvoisier (P.38)
- (iv) ... **animals**; cattle; ...**green plant**; millet (P.58)
- (v) ...**pro-government papers**; Daily Messenger and the Nigerian Mail (P.68)
- (vi) ...**livestock** mostly sheep and rams... (P.71)
- (vii) ...**African Countries**; Kampala, Nigeria, Uganda (P. 216)
- (viii) ...**House leader**; Speaker, Honourable members, Senator (P. 219)
- (ix) ...**commotion**; hissed, applauded ... (P.230)
- (x) ...**Muslim Festival**; Id-el-Kabir (P.293)

Excerpt III and Discussions

- Lizzy had obviously inherited not only her father’s **natural good looks** but also his **strength** and **independence of mind**, traits she needed to survive...(P.3)
- Meanwhile bottles of **Cristal**, **Courvoisier** and other expensive drinks were being opened... (P.38)

From the different samples of hyponyms and/or meronyms, where class inclusion obtains, the meaning of ‘sheep and rams’; is included in the meaning of ‘livestock’ (P.71, sample vi).

Hence, the writer deploys a relationship of hyponymy relating to human actions like rearing of animals and festivals (P.58, sample iv and P.293, sample x) and human inactions like political unrest (P.230, sample ix). There are also co-hyponyms of the lexeme, **traits**, which include *strength*, *good luck* and so on (P.3, sample i). In other words, *strength* is a **trait**; and *good luck* is a **trait**. It should be noted that the different samples showcase the overall activities of humans in their world/environment. Interestingly, (P.13, sample ii), is an instance of the overlap between hyponymy and meronymy. This is because both the types (hyponymy) and parts (meronymy) of the term, **Three Arms Zone** (executive, legislative and judicial arms of government) are implied at the same time.

Meronymy: This is a relationship that is concerned with the part/whole of an entity. Though similar to hyponymy in terms of ‘class inclusion’, meronymy is strictly concerned with the part in a whole of an entity. The instance of *button* and *a shirt* shows a relationship of a part in a whole. Other examples include thus: *blade* and *fan*; *key* and *padlock*, among others.

Occurrences of meronymy in *Tenants of the House*:

- (i) ...**350-member parliament** –Elizabeth was one of the 15 women... (P.1)
- (ii) ...**package** ...phone ...phone manual. (P.171)
- (iii) ...**part of the extraordinary group**---Presidential aides and party chieftains... (P.175)

Excerpt IV and Discussions

- I handed her package over to her. ...“**A mobile phone** and a packet of chocolates.”
“Read the **phone manual**.”...(P.171)
- All week, **Presidential aides** and **party chieftains** had vetted the list of those to be invited to the meeting. For one reason or another, the privilege of being part of the extraordinary group had been extended to me. (P.175)

The different samples of meronymy show the part/whole relationship that exists among **people**; *350-member parliament –Elizabeth was one of the 15 women* (P.1, sample i), their **roles**; *part of the extraordinary group---Presidential aides and party chieftains* (P.175, sample iii) and **possessions**; *package ...phone ...phone manual* (P.171, sample ii). Thus, the lexical relationship of meronymy like hyponymy, is used by the writer for the purpose of clarity in order to show the part/whole distinction and relationship that exists among humans, their roles in the society and their possessions.

Polysemy: Two or more words exhibit a relationship of polysemy if they are variants of the same or related meanings. While polysemic or polysemous words abound in the English dictionary, cases of homonymy are rare. Examples of polysemy include: *foot/foot*; *eye/eye* where the meanings of the pairs of lexemes are the same descriptively. In other words, the pairs share the same descriptive meaning either in terms of structure or place of location and hence, the same anatomical referents (Kreidler, 1998, p. 52).

Occurrences of polysemy in *Tenants of the House*:

- (i) ...fertilizer-fertilizer... (Pp. 6&7)
- (ii) ...vendors-vendors... (P.170)

Excerpt V and Discussions

- Elizabeth had told me what to do to win future elections. “**Fertilizer**,” she whispered to me urgently, ... (P.6).
- Itinerant CD and DVD **vendors** had their players blaring out music at full volume (P.170).

The device of polysemy used by the writer, sees the term, ‘fertilizer’, in sample (i), having the same descriptive meaning as the ordinary word, ‘fertilizer’. Denotatively, the term ‘fertilizer’, is defined as a chemical substance used to enrich a soil in order to improve its yield. In other words, ‘fertilizer’ is used to enrich. Thus, in the novel, the word ‘fertilizer’, is a political term used referentially to mean something good needful to enrich oneself (it refers to money). In both cases therefore, the word ‘fertilizer’ has the same anatomical referent as something used to enrich (be it chemical substance or money). Also, in (P.170, sample ii), the term, ‘vendors’, has the same descriptive meaning. It means or refers to itinerant sellers or hawkers. However, while a vendor is generally construed as an itinerant seller of newspapers, the other meaning of vendors and as used in the novel, means itinerant sellers/hawkers of medicine.

Homonymy: Thakur (2007) avers that homonymy is divided into three; homonyms, homophones and homographs (Thakur, 2007, p. 32). Homonyms are pairs of lexemes with the same word form, same pronunciation but different meanings (*left/left; kind/kind*). Homophones are pairs of lexemes of same pronunciation but different word form and meanings (*read/reed; sea/see*). Homographs are pairs of the same word form but different pronunciation and meanings (*bow/bow; read/read* (past form of *read* pronounced as /red/)).

Occurrences of homonymy in *Tenants of the House*:

- (i) ...services-services... (P.74)
- (ii) ... sweet-sweet... (P.123)
- (iii) ... prayer-prayer... (P.223)

Excerpt VI and Discussions

- My **sweet** darling Mark (P.123).
- “I will first of all put the question on Hon. Aminu’s amendment which now becomes **prayer** No 5. ...” (P.223).

The device of homonymy is also deployed by the writer. In the novel, ‘prayer’ in (P.223, sample iii), is an instance of a pair of homonyms. In this case, ‘prayer’, is considered a pair of lexemes with the same spelling, same pronunciation but different meanings. Hence, the word, ‘prayer’, as used in the novel, means a decision-making statement which is comparable to an order. The meaning of ‘prayer’ as used in the text is thus, the non-restrictive sense. This is because the

restrictive sense /meaning of the word, ‘prayer’, as contained in the dictionary, means either a person that prays or an address to a special deity. Surprisingly, samples of homophones and homographs are absent in the novel. What are the findings and conclusions?

Discussion of findings and Conclusion

The paper observes that literary writers knowingly and unknowingly, used various approaches or theories to word meaning. They included the Referential and the Use approaches to word meaning. Interestingly, the two approaches were captured in the lexical priming theory of Hoey (2005). Hence, in the novel, lexemes were noticed to share similar or dissimilar referents and meanings in order to paint reality. The point informed the simultaneous occurrences of the different lexical relations effectively positioned in the literary text of Okediran, *Tenants of the House*. It should be noted that lexical relations are equivalent to meaning-making devices. The identified –nyms/lexical relations in *Tenants of the House* included antonymy, synonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, polysemy and homonymy. Although samples of antonyms, synonyms, hyponyms, meronyms, polysemes and homonyms abound in the novel, instances of homographs and homophones were rare. Thus, synonymy and antonymy were observed to be the ‘most prominent lexical relations’ in the text. The reason for this is not farfetched; the novel/literary text is political and as such, characters in the novel, share connection with certain truths that relate to their different views/ideologies through their actions and inactions.

In addition, to understand the text, the writer systematically positioned lexemes that would make it easier for readers to pass judgment on the strengths and weaknesses of notable characters through their connection or relationship with different human activities. Hence, human beings in the novel were involved in a state of opposition. Also, characters in the novel were noticed upholding one view or the other for the sake of political self-assertion. Instances of pairs of synonyms and antonyms in *Tenants of the House* text include ever-ready Colt Defender with the synonym, pistol; and human with the antonym, inhuman, respectively. The writer was, therefore, able to deploy synonymy and antonymy successfully because words have the ability to co-occur meaningfully in context; a term known as collocation/permissible word combination (Thakur, 2007, p.47).

The paper also observes that the centrality of the two ‘to-infinitive’ expressions in *Tenants of the House* necessitated the presence of the different inherent ‘-nyms’/lexical relations in the novel. The two infinitives, which function as the subject of the sentence in each case; “To kill is a crime: to kill at the right time is politics”; and “To get my nomination confirmed at the constituency level had been a fierce struggle”; were used in the novel to elucidate political beliefs and intents. As a result, there were expressions in the novel which mean the same thing as the other or mean different things from the others done stylistically to paint a picture of reality or mock certain characters in the Nigerian corridor of power.

To ensure meaningful lexical relationships, therefore, the study notes that characters in the novel are ‘marked members’ of one political position or unit of the other. Thus, characters in the novel could either be perceived in terms of their hierarchies in politics (hyponymy, p. 13); some share the same beliefs (synonymy, p. 306), some differ in opinions (antonymy, p. 35) and some refer to things around them differently in order to suit specific purposes (synonymy, p. 33; polysemy, p. 170; meronymy, p. 171; and homonymy, p. 74).

Hence, the study recommends the teaching and learning of the English ‘-nyms’/ lexical relations in both secondary schools and tertiary institutions of learning in order to aid the understanding of word meaning and interpretation in English language usage. Therefore, a writer’s diction or choice of words could be made more interesting if literary writers painstakingly position different lexical relations in order to convey intended meanings of literary texts to readers as enunciated in Wale Okediran’s, *Tenants of the House*.

References

- Abiodun-Eniayekan, Eugenia N. (2016). A Socio pragmatic Study of Values of Nigerians as Exemplified in Wale Okediran’s *Tenants of the House*: Implication for a Political Caste System. *LASU Journal of Humanities*, 10,191-200.
- Biber, Douglas, Johansson, Stig, Leech, Geoffrey, Conrad, Susan & Finegan, Edward (1999). *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Longman.
- Denham, Kristin & Löbeck, Anne (2010). *Linguistics for Everyone- An Introduction*. Wadsworth.
- Duffley, Patrick (2003). The gerund and the to-infinitive as subject. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 31(4), 324-352.
- Edokpayi, Justina N. (2017). The Language of Satire in Nigerian Politics: A Study of the Syntactic Parameters in Wale Okediran’s *Tenants of the House*. *African Journal Online*, 6 (1-2), 354-375.
- Ekpang, Juliet N. (2014). Literature and Politics: A Semantic Analysis of Wale Okediran’s *Tenants of the House*. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(23).
- English grammar rules for using the infinitive. Retrieved April 4, 2020 from <https://www.english-at-home.com>
- Hoey, Michael (2005). *Lexical Priming-A New Theory of Words and Language*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Infinitive English Grammar EF. Retrieved April 4, 2020 from <https://www.ef.com>
- Kreidler, Charles W. (1998). *Introducing English Semantics*. Routledge.
- Loos, Eugene, Anderson, Susan, H. Day, Jr. Dwight., Jordan, Paul & Wingate, J. Douglas (2004). “What is lexical relation?” *Glossary of Linguistic terms*. LingualLinks.
- Moutoux, E.R. (2020) *Infinitives*. Retrieved April 4, 2020 from <http://www.german-latin-english.com/grammarinfinitive.htm>
- Nordquist, Richard (2020). Understanding the ‘to’ Infinitive in English Grammar. *ThoughtCo*, Aug.27.2020, [thoughtco.com/to-infinitive-meaning-1692471](https://www.thoughtco.com/to-infinitive-meaning-1692471).
- Ojea, Ana (2008). A feature analysis of to-infinitive sentences. *Atlantis Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies*, 30(1), 69-83.
- Okediran, Wale (2009). *Tenants of the House*. Nelson Publishers Limited.
- Oloruntoba-oju, Omotayo (2012) A Voice from the Clinic: Wale Okediran, *Tenants of the House*, On Creative Writing and African Literature. *West Africa Review*, 21, 26-35.
- Quirk, Randolph, Greenbaum, Sidney, Leech, Geoffrey & Svartvik, Jan (1972). *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. Longman.
- Saeed, John I. (2003). *Semantics-Second Edition*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Thakur, Damodar (2007). *Linguistics Simplified –Semantics*. Bharati Bhawan.

The Infinitive-English Grammar Revolution. Retrieved April 4, 2020 from <https://www.english-grammar-revolution.com>

What Is the Infinitive Form of a Verb? (with Examples). Retrieved April 4, 2020 from <http://www.german-latin-english.com/> ;www.grammar-monster.com

7ESL INFINITIVES (2023). Infinitives: What Is An Infinitive? Functions & Examples. 7ESL 2023

LearnEnglish-British Council 'to' –infinitives. Retrieved June 10, 2023 from <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar/...>